



House Health Policy Committee – November 9, 2023

Chair Rogers and Committee Members,

My name is Kim Meeker and I am a very proud and highly competent nurse. I have the additional responsibilities of being the President of the Michigan Organization for Nursing Leadership. I'm writing to express my opposition toward House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336. I am opposed because of the potential these bills have to severely impede access to essential healthcare services for our residents in Michigan, and the claims that these bills will address the nursing shortages in our state are, unfortunately, just not at all accurate.

I believe strongly that staffing decisions should be made by nurses and nurse leaders at the local hospital level and should not be limited to statewide legislative mandated ratios. I have witnessed firsthand the incredible difficulties that a widespread nursing shortage create and know that instead of a one-size-fits-all staffing mandate, we need long-term solutions that support nurses while also maintaining the essential access to healthcare services that Michiganders need and deserve.

To be clear, Michigan nurses universally recognize the numerous and daunting challenges facing hospitals related to shortages and inequitable workforce distribution. The reality is that Michigan hospitals are facing a significant challenge in filling approximately 8,500 job openings for nurses right now, and instituting a one-size-fits-all mandate requiring hospitals to hire more nurses who do not exist will have extremely detrimental effects on the services hospitals can offer to their communities. It will lead to prolonged waiting times for patients, hinder the ability of hospitals to respond to crises and reduce the access to healthcare services that Michiganders need.

As a nurse leader, all I strive for is to make sure that our patients are receiving the care they need, and the experts who should be the ones making staffing decisions are licensed nursing professionals, not the state. Those decisions are incredibly complex and cannot accurately be distilled down to simple ratios. Additional expertise must be used to ensure safe staffing, taking into effect many other aspects such as nurse competency levels, ancillary support, and patient acuity. *Please do not consider limiting those decision points to mandated ratios.*

In conclusion, I respectfully request you withdraw your support for House Bills 4550-4552 and Senate Bills 334-336 and explore alternative solutions that will better address the nursing shortages in our state while preserving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for our residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Meeker, R.N.  
President, Michigan Organization for Nursing Leadership